The Christian Century PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME X | CHICAGO, DECEMBER, 1939 | NUMBER 12

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'He Came Too Soon, This Christ'

BY G. BROMLEY OXNAM

IN his play, "The Wingless Victory," Maxwell Anderson has written a tragedy that strangely enough may be called beautiful. It is phrased in the strong, simple English of Elizabethan days, and speaks of the terrible nemesis that forever pursues intolerance. The scene is laid in Salem, Massachusetts, about the year 1800. Nathaniel McQueston and his wife, Oparre, are the central characters. He is a sea captain, who left Salem in poverty to return in wealth. Oparre is a Malay princess, who had saved his life. They return with their two children, to meet the bitter rebuff of racial prejudice; a rebuff in this instance made the more bitter by the covetous spirit of the self-righteous who envied his possessions.

Oparre, once a worshiper of the tribal gods of revenge and blood, is drawn to the gentle, kindly Christ. She seeks to win the love of her husband's people; but they are cruel in their intolerance, even though, in pleading declaration, they hear her say, "Still carrying in my heart the secret Christ by whom you live, I answer, I am your friend." But she warns them: "Dark as your words have been, dark as your looks at me, evil as you may think you are, your evil is as the play of children to the world we two have left behind."

But they will have none of her, nor her children. They would ruin her husband. At last she speaks to her husband's brother, a clergyman, whose prejudice is the more terrible because of the very passion of religion: "Sir, if this winter coast is tarnished by our footsteps in the snow, as I fear it might be; if the Christ you worship gives sanctuary only to his own lest they be polluted, say this at once, and we shall rouse the children, and be away. I came only with a hope."

They have their way with her, and in a moment of awful trial her husband falters, broken by the over-

25 Cents a Copy | Entered as second-class matter October 14, 1929, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 440 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. | Two Dollars a Year

whelming pressure of the community. Knowing that she must leave, and leave alone save for her children and a faithful servant, she repudiates the Christ, rejects all; turns once again to gods of earth and blood. She boards the ship, resolved to die and take her little ones with her. She speaks of "unwanted babes" and of the "drink of darkness." Taking the poison, with broken heart we hear her say, "We shall sleep and turn to nameless ground."

Awaiting the end, she kneels to utter a prayer, her last. It is addressed to the gods she knew: "The earth rolls toward the dark, and men begin to sleep. God of the children, god of the lesser children of the earth, the black, the unclean, the vengeful, you are mine now as when I was a child. He came too soon, this Christ of peace. Men are not ready yet. Another hundred thousand years they must drink your potion of tears and blood . . ."

"He came too soon, this Christ. Men are not ready yet. Another hundred thousand years . . ." "He came too soon."

Paul, the apostle, believed Christ had come in the fullness of time. Oparre, the Malay princess, thought he had come too soon. A court, charged with decision, might conclude that the evidence justifies the contention of Oparre rather than that of Paul.

It is written that the common people heard him gladly; but he was despised and rejected. The long-awaited Messiah had come too soon. Barabbas was released. Jesus was crucified. It was not the recitation of a line from a predestined drama. It was the crucifixion of a poor Galilean, who had come too soon. Surely the Garden of Gethsemane was more than a predetermined scene from the pen of the Eternal Playwright.

THE UNSPOKEN THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

Did the broken-hearted young Christ, who would have the cup pass from him, who feared the Father had forsaken him, believe he had come too soon? There was so much more he desired to tell them; but he said, "Ye cannot bear it now."

When Jesus came to Golgotha
They hanged him on a tree;
They drove great nails through hand and feet,
And made a Calvary;
They crowned him with a crown of thorns,
Red were his wounds and deep;
For those were crude and cruel days
And human flesh was cheap.

He had come too soon!

Oparre might well call upon the court to note the many centuries of struggle, unfortunately not yet concluded, wherein man lived the fighting way of life. The warrior was king. There are those who yet believe that strength comes through struggle. They insist that man is ruled by an inner urge to survive. They argue that nature is red in tooth and claw and if man would survive he must be fit, physically fit. They tell us this is the fundamental reality beneath the thin veneer which man hypocritically calls civilization.

Did Christ come too soon? Is our biological heritage too strong? Is this talk of the strong bearing the burdens of the weak, of laying down a life for a friend, of finding life in losing it, the demand of a poor dreamer? Are we fated to struggle on, until at last the groups that have survived because they have learned to cooperate in fighting against their environment develop enough of the cooperative spirit to realize at last that mutual aid must be carried into all the activities of men?

Oparre would not be alone in that court room. Regardless of the millions who bow before cross or crucifix, there are many millions more who argue, "This Christ came too soon." His teachings, we are told, are but the evanescent pictures of perfectionist ethics projected upon a silver screen. They insist that the Christ who came too soon must be taught the futility of the distant ideal.

TOO SOON FOR THE CHRIST WAY OF LIFE

A Chinese Christian said, "You cannot teach men to love their enemies in the twinkling of an eye." It is still an eye for an eye. The fighting way of life carries on; and grows more brutal in the very refinement of the money-making way of life. Here the financier is king. Sidney Lanier, poet of the South, tells us that "Trade is war grown miserly."

You came too soon, Galilean, too soon to talk of the second mile, the cloak, the cup of cold water—too soon to tell of houses builded on the sand, of new barns, and mammon—too soon for Matthew and Zaccheus, for broken alabaster and forgiven sins. Puritanical codes justify flinging the first and the last stone. Too soon to behold Mary of the streets become Mary of the saints!

We are still in the fighting way of life, the money-making way of life, it is argued. Jesus dreamed of a personality-making way of life, in which the suffering servant would be king. But we are forced, Oparre might say, to be awake to the realities, the realities of the fighting way of life, of the money-making way of life. Were this poor Malay princess addressing the court, with what overwhelming argument might she build her case? She would repeat it: "Your Christ came too soon, I say. Look if you will to the Eternal City. Was it not upon a rock your church was built? Is it not called Saint Peter's Church? Did not the man Paul, who was so sure that Jesus came in the fullness of time, did he not lie in prison there? Did he not die there? . . ."

ANOTHER WHO CAME TOO SOON

Paul, like his Lord, came too soon. The ancient Roman was ready for the Christ of Empire. He could envision the empire that was to be, the Holy Roman Empire. The Roman conqueror could understand killing in the name of the very cross upon which Jesus had been killed—"By this sign conquer."

No, he was not too soon for the empire builders, this Empire Christ. But the Christ of Love, the peasant who had no place to lay his head, he came too soon. They were ready, these mediaeval theologians, for the Christ of Dogma. With what delight did they create

the formula to explain him! Actually, they buried him in another tomb. They bound him with creedal grave-clothes. He was not too soon, this Christ of the Councils. But the Christ who declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," this Jesus who knew the truth would make us free, he came too soon. And so today, in the Eternal City, the city of Peter's Church and Paul's Christ, we hear a new Caesar who fears not the usable Christ of Empire, nor the dead Christ of Dogma. Mussolini said in one of his speeches:

> We wish to hear no more about brotherhood . . . because relationships between states are relations of force and these relations of force are the determining elements of their policy.

G. Bromley Oxnam

> We must arm. The watchword is this: More cannon, more ships, more airplanes, at whatever cost, with whatever means, even if it should mean wiping out all that is called civil life. When one is strong one is dear to one's friends and feared by one's enemies. Since prehistoric times one shout has come down on the waves of the centuries and the series of generations: "Woe to the weak!"

There it is: "Woe to the weak!" Oparre might point out the leaders of Left and Right, the dictator leaders, who profane the very name leader. They are not leaders, but drivers. "You came too soon, Jesus."

OTHER WOES, OTHER LEADERS

It is Mussolini who cries, "Woe to the weak!" The woes that Jesus uttered were directed to Scribes and Pharisees. Were they uttered too soon? "You are all brothers . . . for One is your Heavenly Father." Moffatt translates the next verse: "One is your leader, even the Christ." Not Benito Mussolini, not the Fuehrer—Adolf Hitler! One is your leader, even Christ. You came too soon, Christ; we have other leaders. He who would be greatest among you must become the servant of all. It is to laugh. Whoever humbles himself will be uplifted—absurd!

And is there not a danger in the church itself? Some churchmen have become so enamored with the very idea of the church that they regard the church as an end in itself rather than as a means to create the Kingdom. Will we say he came too soon, with his insistence upon finding life by losing it? When he scathingly denounced the Pharisees, did he not refer to swearing by the sanctuary, the altar, the gift? Did he not talk of tithes of mint and anise and cummin? Is there not danger that we, too, may forget the weightier matters of the law? We do well to remember that he said, "Woe to you, you irreligious scribes and Pharisees!" Let us note that word irreligious and be sure that the idea of church does not become a tomb for the prophets.

Methodism is one, we say. What do we mean? Are we to mimic the upper room, to receive the bread and wine, to content ourselves with a form? Are we to stand a few moments later in the open court, denying him thrice? Is it to be the form of communion and the fact of denial? Is the denial to be found in the mental reservation, "He came too soon, this Christ. Men are not ready yet. Another hundred thousand years . . ."? Or is Methodism to be one in declaring, "Now is the accepted time"? Not "Now is the appointed time," but "Now is the accepted time." We Methodists, who have emphasized the place of decision in the Christian life, ought to be the very first to declare "Not in another hundred thousand years, but now." The church that nominally accepts Jesus, but virtually rejects him, is no church.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR BROTHERHOOD

Now is the time to cease postponing the idea of brotherhood. Now is the time to take it and enthrone it. Let us not associate the idea of holy love with altar alone, but relate it to mill and mine and market. Let us take the idea of a Father of all mankind and translate that idea into instruments that make for a brotherly world. Let us have done once and for all with the atheism that lies in pagan statements bandied about by nominal Christians who declare, "Self-interest is the only sufficient motive to drive men to real achievement"; "moral right must bow to economic necessity"; "war is inevitable." Now is the accepted time. Christ did not come too soon. We came to Christ too late.

If there has been a touch of bitterness in any word I have uttered, as I have referred indirectly to tyrannies across the sea, I am sorry. It was unintended. May we not behold in a suggestion that has come to us from David Lawrence a power that is yet to be used by those who accept Jesus. He calls upon us to consider the use of moral force as the world confronts the mobilization of physical force.

"What would happen," asks Mr. Lawrence, "if our

people, recognizing our own sinning, would nevertheless pause at noon each day to pray, honestly pray for the peoples who suffer tyranny, pray even for the tyrant, not that we tolerate his tyranny, but that he would save him from his sins. Then, in the act of prayer, we should call upon God to forgive us because, when we had the power and the privilege of cooperating with growing democracies, we put down upon these youthful democracies burdens grievous to be born. If in that prayer we could dedicate ourselves to the reordering of this world upon a just basis, what might happen?"

I do not know, but I do know that now is the time. Paul himself called upon us to make love a real thing.

Are we to call out, "He came too soon, this Christ of peace. Men are not ready yet. Another hundred thousand years . . ."? I think not. I think we are going to say, "Now is the accepted time."

Everlasting Childhood

By Burris Jenkins

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and a babe lying in a manger. Luke 2:16.

THE story of the birth of Christ and of that first Christmas in the little town of Bethlehem, the whole world would probably agree, is the most beautiful idyll that was ever sung. Whether all who hear it accept its every detail or no, nonetheless the beauty and the value of the exaltation of childhood contained in it centers at once into every heart that hears it and stays there throughout life.

The early chapters of the Gospels, particularly the Gospel of St. Luke, which contain the story of the birth and childhood of Jesus go by the name of "The gospel of the infancy," a fitting title. Whatever one may believe about the literal accuracy in all details of this winning narrative, this much we must all agree upon, that ever since that tale was told childhood has held a different place in the affections and the esteem of all the world. I would not for a moment maintain that those who never heard this story did not love and value their children. To love one's little ones is as instinctive, no doubt, with humanity as with almost all other creatures; and there is testimony enough from the histories of nations who had never heard the gospel of the infancy to show the natural affection in the hearts of men that springs to meet the helplessness as well as the winsomeness of little children in all places and in all times.

And yet I venture the assertion that wherever this story of the inn at Bethlehem, and the birth of this little child who was cradled in the manger, has gone, childhood has forever after held a higher place, nestled in warmer hearts, created a firmer faith and a deeper expectation for its promise than before that story came. Wherever Christmas and the gospel of the infancy have entered into the texture of a nation's thinking, there the value of every individual life has risen higher in the national esteem and therefore the preciousness of every little child has been immeasurably enhanced. Wherever throughout the world Christmas holds a high place, there children reign and childhood, everlasting childhood, comes into its own.

OUR ADULT CIVILIZATION

It is altogether in keeping with this fact that he who was born on Christmas day and so set the calendar for all the world ever since, when he grew to manhood and undertook to shape the thoughts and ideals of men, should have taken a little child one day and set him on his knee in the midst of all the adult throng by which he was surrounded and should have said to them, "Unless you become like this little child, you cannot enter into the proper relations with your fellow men, with the fraternal order, the family life, which I have come to teach and which I call the Kingdom of God." That seems a very simple statement to make and to understand; but we have been two thousand years trying to get hold of it, and we haven't got it yet.

We persist in maintaining an adult civilization. Our social structure we build preeminently for adults, and children we rank as a necessary nuisance, to be seen and not heard. Our families we run for the benefit of the adults for the most part; and the children we make behave so they will not interfere with the superior comfort and complacency of the grown-up members of the household. Our schools are adultized, and are ordered, not to give full play to the initiative and self-expression of the children so much as to add to the convenience of the teachers and administrative officers. Our churches are built and managed for adults: children must not make a noise in them; sermons are preached for grown-ups, music is designed for adults; all the appointments are for maturity and not for that childhood which the great Master said was the synonym for the Kingdom of God. No, we haven't learned much about this gospel of infancy in two thousand years.

Although we have seen numerous instances of the fact, still we do not understand that genius is everlasting childhood; that the choicest members of the race are those who never grow up and never grow old; that the very few who really belong to the Kingdom of God live in everlasting childhood, boyish and girlish to the last. No, that is not easy to grasp and to understand, and almost nobody who hears or reads these words has caught the truth of Jesus' statement that unless you become as a little child you can't learn the real secret of life.

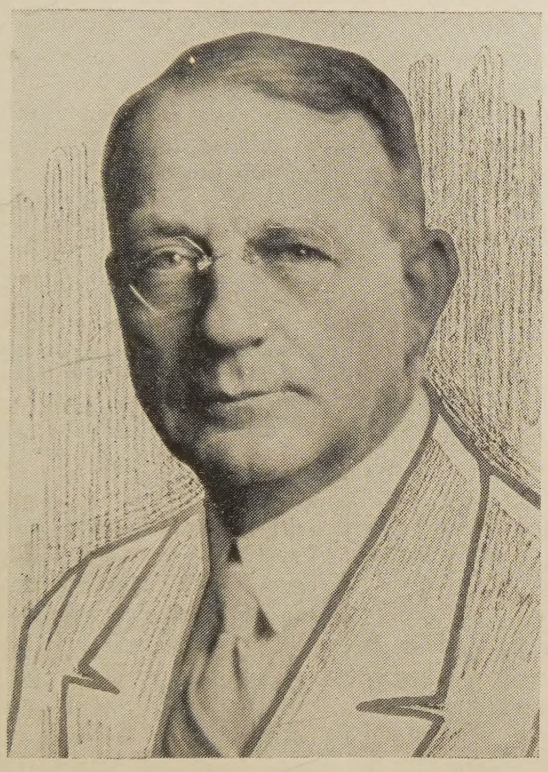
THE EYE OF THE IMAGINATION

This is not to intimate that childhood is ideal, finished, perfect; far from it; but it is to intimate that the secret of life is in becoming, growing, progressing, being imperfect but moving on toward perfection. Childhood is selfish, barbaric, savage; and that is a characteristic of the whole race which never is outgrown; but given half a chance childhood conquers its savagery, overcomes its barbarism, restrains its self-assertion of its own will and desire, disciplines itself, and grows. That is the secret of the Kingdom of God, to

grow; and the crime of life, what we call sin, is the refusal to grow; and a lot of us adults are living in that sin.

Now, to analyze just what Jesus meant by his gospel of the infancy, the everlasting childhood of those choice spirits who should be admitted into the reign or realm of God, what does a child have that is so desirable for the rest of us?

First, imagination. A child sees so much more in the world than the rest of us whose eyesight of the mind has begun to fail. We have seen things so often and so long and so crooked that we have made mental pictures of them, stereotyped, fixed like cement, and we



BURRIS JENKINS

cannot change them. But the child sees the world full of a number of things, so many birds and beasts that are real but that we oldsters cannot see. And when the child gives free reign to his imagination and sees bears in the alley, then we check him up and tell him he is a liar. Not so, we are the liars in the case, and the child sees and tells truth far more real than the concrete facts which appeal to us scientists and oldsters of every kind. The genius, too, lays hold upon the ideal behind the real, just because he is in his everlasting childhood; and we resist him too, call him a liar, and refuse to believe him generally until long after he is dead; then we find out that his imagination spoke more truly than our prosaic minds and vision and give him a grudging and reluctant credit and crown.

SIMPLICITY AND HUMILITY

Then the child has simplicity—while we older people have learned duplicity. The child says what he thinks and what he means, and acts it out. He is sincere, and is on the surface just what he is underneath. How much of this inestimable quality do we find among adults? Very little. The pressure and complexity of life begin teaching us very early to dissemble, to hide ourselves behind masks, to say one thing and mean another, so as to smooth our way through the world, to be one thing and look another so as to get credit according to the false standards of a warped and twisted society. Simplicity belongs to the Kingdom of God, as it belongs to the little child; and the really great men who have walked this poor old misguided earth are the simple ones, the ones who have dared to be sincere, refused to play a part, torn away the masks from before their faces. Christian or non-Christian, they nevertheless caught the secret of the childlike kingdom; from Socrates to Mark Twain, they were simple souls that never grew up. No wonder they are charming, for really the most attractive thing that any of us can be is to be himself.

Along with simplicity goes humility. Not the hypocritical humility of the Uriah Heeps who have forever thronged religious assemblies from the days of the Pharisees down to the present hour, but the real humility, the meekness, of those who shall inherit the earth and the Kingdom of God; which consists not in spinelessness, not in cant and whining, not in a false "spirichality" which is not spirituality at all but is only pride; but in a just estimate of one's self, a fair measure of one's own abilities and defects, a calm and unbiased estimate of one's assets and liabilities, a humility that does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think but does think of itself just as highly as it ought to think, and does think of everybody else just as highly as one ought to think of them. That I call humility, and that I have seen in every truly great person I've ever met. I could name some of them: Alexander Procter, President Eliot, Chief Justice Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Mme. Chiang Kai Shek, Viscount Cecil, General Pershing, William James, Charles Eliot Norton—oh, the list runs clear through the short span of my life and its contacts here and there with the really great. These people belonged in the Kingdom of God and their humbleness, their meekness, which they share with unspoiled childhood, marks their membership.

MARRING THE CHILD HEART

The heart of a child, and of those who are really in the Kingdom, overflows with good will, until that child becomes warped by adult mistakes. The child naturally, if left to itself, runs up to other children to embrace them, rushes to animals to fondle them, kisses and hugs inanimate objects out of pure kindliness. No wonder the angels sang, "Good will to men." Unfortunately, very early, and unconsciously, we implant in the hearts of our children distrust and fear, hostility and timidity, toward other people and toward the world round about us; but what I'm trying to say is that left alone, the natural impulse of the child is an impulse of kindliness, good will, taking the world at its face value and loving it.

Along with this quality goes peacefulness. There is

no quarrel with its world in the heart of an unspoiled child. Even unscientific treatment of the little one on our part, bad food, bad hygiene, that makes him suffer, does not create vindictiveness. The resignation of children, even in the midst of disease and suffering, might well teach a lesson to the remainder of us. It has no enmity toward its environment; left alone, it remains at peace with others and with all about it. And there can never be world-wide peace until we repent and become as little children. The self-assertion of men and nations, greed and ambition, commercial and political, all these do violence to the spirit of everlasting childhood and to the Kingdom of God on earth. No wonder the angels sang, "Peace on earth."

The dearest thing in the world to childhood, perhaps, is self-expression, the desire to make things, do things, invent things and use things. This measure of egoism, this tendency to use the world as a foil, or a stage on which to play, this, Jesus is very far from repressing, and with this the Kingdom of God is only in the utmost harmony. The everlasting child life, so far from sinking into quiescence, inertia, do-nothingness, is forever expanding, forever moving, forever growing, forever living out in restrained and artistic expression its highest impulses.

OPEN MINDS AND HEARTS

Then perhaps the most charming attribute of children and the child life grows out of the qualities already mentioned, and that is its open-mindedness, docility, willingness to learn. No doubt Jesus had this crowning quality in mind when he declared that unless we become as little children we can never enter into the inner circle of his associates. Here, too, comes into the picture a quality that is common to the child and to the very great. Someone has defined education, culture, as the attitude of the suspended mind; that is, the mind that is not made up but is open to conviction. How few such minds there are! Most of us have closed our minds on this, that or the other subject, indeed on most subjects. It is so much easier to harden and to crystallize, to shut up our minds and to refuse to think and listen and grow; it is so much harder to keep forever alert, open-eared, open-eyed, for new truth and beauty and goodness. Straight and narrow is that way and few there be that find it; while broad and easy is the path of fossilization, stony indifference to the new and the strange; and many there be who walk in it.

Childhood and the childlike spirit—the most beautiful and inspiring thing in all this terrible world! Let it scatter its radiance into our lives at Christmas time, and let us try to keep it throughout all the year. Jesus said another thing about this matter, "Beware how you offend one of those little ones," adding, "It were better that a millstone be hanged about your neck and you be drowned in the depths of the sea." Beware how you dominate, dwarf and twist a little life by the imposition of the adult will and the adult pattern upon it; beware how you refuse to let the little child come into the world, decline even to let it be born at all because of your adult comfort, convenience, luxury.

The most golden thing in all this world is this everlasting childhood. How we respond to it, how it lights our war-weary faces when we but see it! Few of us are so hardened, so embittered, or have sunk so low, that we cannot respond to childhood, its radiant beauty and its charm. Our jaded minds answer to its imagination; what little we have left of honesty responds to its simplicity and sincerity; if we are not humble and never can be humble, a little child can almost make us so. If there is no kindliness and good will, or scarcely a vestige of it left after our bitter warfare with this world, a little child can almost break our armor with its soft hands and make us gentle once again. Thrown into contact with one of these little ones, we begin to express our best selves once more and like it, find ourselves again trying to do things, invent things, live out the best things from within. If we have closed our minds and hearts in self-complacency, the questions of a little child, if anything, will open us up again to light and to the truth.

The salvation of this world, it is very clear, depends upon the Christ and the gospel of the infancy.

They Went Home a Different Way

By Delos O'Brian

THE rich message and pageantry of Christmas have a never fading appeal in all ages. Christmas stirs our hearts deeply as does no other observance in our religion. It brings us into mental and emotional companionship with the heart of Christianity. It speaks to everyone regardless of creed or opinions. It cuts across differences. It levels the world to one common estate. Rich and poor share alike in the joys and in the bounties of its season. Saint and sinner are inclined alike to one common communion of brotherhood and good will.

Nowhere in all literature, or in all history, is there anything to compare with the eternal, sweeping, human appeal of Christmas with its pageantry and its pervading spirit. The return of Christmas year after year is a welcome and a warming experience. No matter what beliefs we may hold, we re-enact its pageantry and redramatize its message. The star that guided the shepherds and the wise men has become a symbol without which no Christmas decoration is quite complete. The words of the angel chorus have become a treasure without which no Christmas worship ever sounds quite genuine. The search of the shepherds and of the wise men for the lonely stable in which lay the new-born babe has come to symbolize man's quest for some solid spiritual ground upon which to rest his hopes. The wise men, sometimes called kings, bowing before the lowly manger have become a sign of humility and resignation which pervade our thoughts of yuletide. The meager gifts of the shepherds and the rich gifts of the kings have become a

signal for universal giving when the Christmas hour strikes each year. The Holy Family—the little child, the mother, and the father standing near—has become an endless subject for artists and an endless object of wonder and even worship.

THE PERIL OF PAGEANTRY

The whole rich pageantry of Christmas is beautiful and moving, and we would not be without it. Yet the pageantry of Christmas is all that some people ever see. For some people this Christmas will be an interval of unreality in an otherwise realistic world. It will be a play acted and forgotten. That is the danger. We may let the pageantry and the symbolism of Christmas be a substitute for a serious and mature Christian attitude.

The editor of a magazine asks, "Is Christmas only a holiday?" An author inquires, "Is Christmas only a sad caricature of Christianity?" And if we are honest about it we shall have to reply that Christmas is both of these things to many, far too many, people. If we are honest about it we cannot lightly ignore Thomas Hardy's criticism:

> "Peace upon earth" was said. We sing it,
> And pay a million priests to bring it;
> After two thousand years of mass
> We've got as far as poison gas.

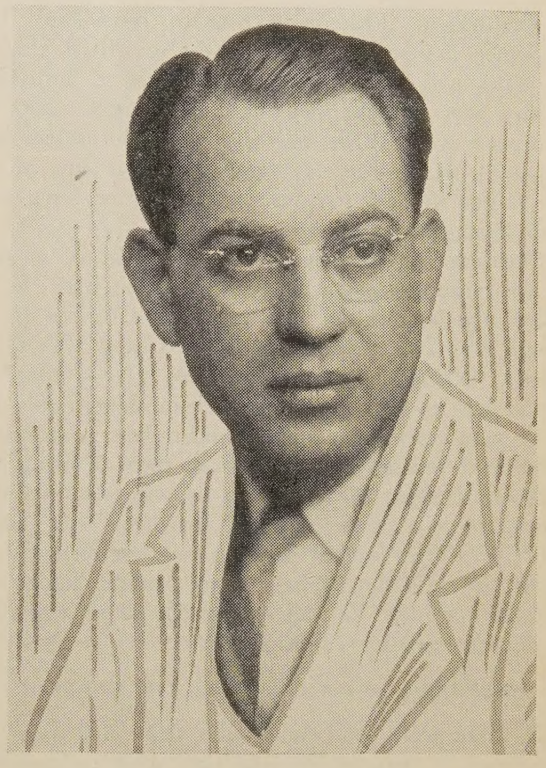
In his book, *I Write As I Please,* Duranty tells the tale of a Russian empress who wished to visit the famine-stricken areas of her realm that she might see for herself the condition of her unfortunate subjects. Her ministers, wishing to spare her the discomfiture of looking upon starving faces and witnessing the terror that had spread with the famine, sent artists and workmen ahead of the royal party. These men built whole villages with beautiful cottages and clean streets for the empress to pass through. But the villages were only stage scenery, for the buildings and homes were no more than false fronts. Only the fattest and the best fed of the peasants were selected to hail the empress as she rode by. When she completed her tour she returned to her palace satisfied and very happy. "For," said she, "the famine has done no great harm to my country or to my subjects. The peasants are well fed and happy. The villages are comfortable and clean. We will listen to no more false tales about terror and starvation."

THE INDIFFERENT MULTITUDES

The pageantry of the ministers had deceived the empress into believing that all was right when all was not right. That is always the danger of pageantry. The age-long tragedy of Christmas has been that its pageantry has sometimes deceived the world into believing that all was right when all was not right. That is the danger now. Christmas may be a play acted against temporary scenery—some will make it that; or it may be a moving human drama reviving and strengthening the best in us against the background of Jesus' mature and lasting judgments—some will make it that.

If we could get at the truth of the matter, we might find that Matthew and Luke had something very profound in mind when they described the pageantry of the first Christmas. They were not just writing scenarios to cover up the stark reality of an unhappy and famished world. These men meant business! Their pageantry was more than mummery! It was what pageantry should be when it is used intelligently: a glowing and persuasive setting against which are played the truths, the promises and the problems of human life.

The first message from Matthew and Luke is this. There were multitudes to whom the first Christmas



DELOS O'BRIAN

meant nothing at all. Two small companies came searching for the meaning of that holy night, the one a band of shepherds representing the humblest station in society, the other three kings representing the highest station in society. But in between these two little bands there were a multitude of men and women who slept peacefully on, unaware that anything important was happening. For the few shepherds and the three kings who were searching out the meaning of the first Christmas night there were thousands who were unconcerned.

Did it ever strike you as strange that while the heavens were ablaze with glory and unfamiliar voices broke the stillness of the night, so few people were awake to participate in the events of the first Christmas? Not even the innkeeper was on hand to guide his visitors with the light of his lamp and to extend to them the customary hospitality of an Oriental house. The few shepherds and the three kings came unobserved and departed unobserved. They came alone

and went away alone. I wonder if Matthew and Luke are not setting forth an important and serious truth: while a few searched many slept!

> This is a hallowed moment. All the evening
> Wears holy splendor like a clear, white gown
> And there is silence—silence deep and silver
> Where breathless beauty stars the dreaming town.

Bethlehem was a silent, dreaming town on the night that Jesus was born. For the few who were aware of the occurrence of a great event, there were multitudes who were unaware.

But they were not unaware because they did not know. That is the point. Read Matthew's account of the wise men's journey. They did not go directly to Bethlehem. They came first to Jerusalem. The wise men did not know where the new-born king of the Jews was to be found. They came to Jerusalem because they thought they could learn there where his birthplace was. When they arrived in Jerusalem they began to ask, "Where is the newly born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star rise and we have come to do homage to him."

Matthew says, "When King Herod heard of this, he was troubled and *all* Jerusalem with him. So he called together all the high priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ was to be born." When the scribes informed Herod that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, Herod told the three wise men about it and asked them to continue upon their journey. He also asked them to bring him back word about the child but he was not interested enough to go himself or to send any of his own people. And if "all Jerusalem" knew about the birth of the Christ it could hardly have been a secret among the common people. Yet all Jerusalem slept peacefully through the first Christmas night.

SHEPHERDS AS WELL AS KINGS SAW THE STAR

If there were multitudes who slept and were unconcerned, it was not because they were incapable of understanding the sign of an important event. That is the second message which stands out clearly in the Scripture. The signs that foretold the first Christmas were understandable to the humblest and the highest. Both the humble shepherds and the kingly wise men saw the signs and understood them. Both were aware. Both knew.

Great events are often visible to the wise men of the world. We know that. But what we sometimes overlook is that great events can also be visible to the humblest man or woman. Indeed wisdom alone is no guarantee of the kind of understanding that knows great men, great times, or great events. There were many wise men in the ancient world but only three of them were aware of this far-reaching occurrence which we now celebrate, and they were from a far distant country.

Wisdom and expertness were not enough in the ancient world nor are they enough in our modern world. A very humble person with a moral and spiritual awareness of beauty, of justice, of love may be better qualified to understand and appreciate greatness in men and events than a very wise person who lacks moral compulsion and spiritual insight.

The humble, ordinary person is very important. That is the message of the Scripture here. For the humble man or woman may be just as alive to the things of the spirit as the world's greatest wise man. A modern philosopher puts it in another way. He says: "There is a curious idea abroad that only specialists and experts are capable of answering the fundamental questions at issue in modern society. This is the reverse of the truth. The expert and the specialist, the highly trained, may be useful and essential for solving technical problems about the means by which the general solution can be carried into practical effect, but they are positively disqualified for deciding what the general purposes should be."

The humble man or woman is just as important as the expert. For without many men and women throughout the whole body of society who are alive to the loftiest meanings and challenges of life there can be little lasting progress and not much personal satisfaction. The simplest acts of worship, of kindness, of generosity, of genuine love are the keys that unlock the door of life's bountiful storehouse. Any man or woman humble or high, shepherd or king, knows the signs of those pleasant paths along life's highway. They are as visible as the star of Bethlehem was on the first Christmas night—to all. That is the second message: the signs of life's important values are visible to everyone who has eyes to see.

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTMAS CHANGES MEN

The description of the first Christmas ends with this sentence concerning the wise men: "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." I have often wondered if that was not one way of saying that the wise men had experienced something in Bethlehem which made it impossible for them to return home by the same way which they had come. They had seen a new vision. They had found new loyalties. They had discovered new objectives. They were no longer the same men. Having been changed themselves, they changed the road they traveled. They could not go back by the same way that they had come. "They departed into their own country another way."

That is the third message of the Scripture here. Is that not also the whole message of Christmas? Someone has said, "At Christmas we come closer to what we ought to be." We do that because our eyes are watching the heavens for every new sign. Our hearts and our minds are listening for the voices of the angel chorus—"On earth peace, good will among men." Our skepticism and our doubts are silenced while we bow for a little while before the rebirth of the spirit of love across the earth. At Christmas we all come a little closer to letting our eyes rest upon the things which they should be seeing. We come closer to feeling the finer sentiments which we should be expressing all the time. We come closer to one another, closer to brotherliness, closer to love and life. We come closer to the

heart of faith, closer to the city of God, closer to God himself.

It is no mere fleeting drama that we witness each Christmas, but the maturing of a profound spiritual experience. No one, having participated in the pageantry and felt the message of Christmas, returns home in exactly the same way that he came. He does not go home by the same way if he has really seen the signs and heard the prophecies of the Christmas season. That is a sound psychological fact. "If your eyes look for nothing but evil," said Maeterlinck, "you will always see evil triumphant; but if you have learned to let your glance rest on sincerity, simpleness, truth, you will ever discover deep down in all things the silent overpowering victory of the thing which you love." Does not Christmas teach us to let our glance rest upon the real world of God—the world of love, of truth, of beauty and of bountiful security? And may that not be the real world which men and women should be discovering, building and revealing? Dr. Frederick R. Griffin thinks it is. "Christmas," he says, "is not a dream or an illusion, it is an awakening to the real world."

Passing before us now is the whole rich pageantry of Christmas. Once this sign was the portent of a great beginning. It was the first chapter in the biography of a divinely important life. That is what this Christmas can be also. It can be the first chapter in a new adventure for each of us. It can be the experience moving us to seek, the year round, for the real world of God. But if Christmas is to leave with us the heartening glory which it brings for one brief moment to our world, it will not be an isolated holiday. Rather it will be a deeply moving spiritual experience bringing us the confident conviction of the triumphant victory of love in us and upon the earth. And if we have touched one small perfection, or seen one new star of hope, or heard one new divine song in life, we have started upon that new way. We have even now come nearer to that real world of which Christmas is both the sign and the promise.

What Is Brotherhood?

WHAT is brotherhood in international or social relations or in any other relations, for that matter? There is no need in trying to tell here all about brotherhoods, but it does not mean that in a normal family brothers stand together with their arms around one another's shoulders. Brotherhood is not necessarily shown in outbursts of emotional affection, but in action based on knowledge that the brothers are bound together in such fashion that they have common heritage, common devotion to the family, common respect for one another, common aims, and certainly mutual good will.

FRANCIS J. MCCONNELL.

INSTEAD of being divided into warring camps, ruled by hatred and distrust, we should settle the problems of labor and industry by uniting ourselves in one group, as brothers, as Christians, as fellow citizens, devoted to a common cause.

GOV. LURIN D. DICKINSON.

Abiding Realities in a Changing World

BY HAROLD W. RUOPP

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three. I Corinthians 13:13.

ON a Sabbath day in the year 1847, the Rev. Henry F. Lyte conducted his last communion service, bringing to a close a pastorate of twenty-four years in Brixham, England. A fatal illness had overtaken him and he was about to leave England for the south in the hope that he might prolong his life. Toward evening of that last Sunday he walked down his garden path to the seaside. There, with all the nonessentials stripped away, he thought out the imagery and many of the lines of his now famous hymn:

> Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
> The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.

And into that hymn, in the second stanza, he put the line:

> Change and decay in all around I see.

Those words, in bold letters, might well be written over every civilization and every period of history.

I

"The old order changeth"—one doesn't need to take time to prove that. It has always been changing; it is now changing; it always will change.

"There is nothing new," says E. Stanley Jones, "in saying that we live in an age of transition. Someone has facetiously said that when Adam and Eve were going out of the Garden of Eden, Adam turned to Eve and said, 'My dear, this is an age of transition.' The oldest known bit of writing in the world is a piece of papyrus in a Constantinople museum. On it is written: 'Alas, times are not what they used to be. Children no longer obey their parents and everyone wants to write a book.' "

Once men thought the earth was the center of our universe and spread over it like a huge inverted bowl was the sky. Then along came Copernicus and Galileo with their telescopes and observations and calculations and revealed the then-disconcerting truth that the sun was at the center, and the earth was only a tiny speck revolving about the sun. And the old order changed!

Once men thought the earth was flat, that if they traveled far enough they would topple off into some horrible abyss. Then along came Columbus with three small ships, sailed west, and behold! never found the edge. And the old order changed!

Once men believed that the world was created all at once by divine fiat. Then along came Charles Darwin, and ever since men have been talking about the theory and the process of evolution. And the old order changed!

Once men looked at things and thought them to be what they seemed. Then along came our modern physical scientists and now we talk in terms of atoms,

of electrons and protons and neutrons, of energy. And the old order changed!

Once men believed in the divine right of kings. Then they did something to the kings in the name of democracy, liberty, fraternity, equality. Now the pendulum swings again, and nation after nation has returned to one kind of dictatorship or another. So the old order changed—and changes!

Thus we might go on and on—illustrating what is already perfectly obvious. Change here, change there, change everywhere! Whether the change is for the good or bad is quite beside the point. All we are noting is the *fact* of change. "Change and decay in all around I see." And those of us who refuse to stick our heads in the sands of wishful thinking, we see it too.

II

With change time and again—and perhaps inevitably—there come confusion, perplexity, doubts. The faster the change the greater is apt to be the confusion, the more pronounced the perplexity, the more profound the doubts. We find ourselves moving, if we move at all, in circles. With the small boy in A. A. Milne's poem, we say:

I think I am a muffin man.
I haven't got a bell;
I haven't got the muffin things
That muffin people sell.
Perhaps I am a postman,
No, I think I am a train.
I'm feeling rather funny and
I don't know what I am.
But
Round about,
And round about,
And round about I go.

Or more solemnly we say:

Doubts surge within me;
I cannot understand all that come to pass within this world.

Or with Henry F. Lyte:

Change and decay in all around I see.

III

Which brings us to the key question: In all this flux of life, this change, this decay, this confusion, is there anything that abides? To that question great religion has an immediate and certain answer. And in no place has it been more simply or more effectively stated than in the words of St. Paul: "And *now* abideth faith, hope, love; these three." In his more pessimistic moods a man is apt to ask, Was Paul fooling himself; was he perchance laboring under some titanic illusion? Well, if he was then woe be to him and woe be to us! We are of all creatures most to be pitied. We are mere play-actors in a drama that in the end comes to nothing. There is nothing in reality to match our dreams. We are the victims of our own delusions.

I, for one, however am willing to take my stand with St. Paul. In all the changing scenes of the drama of human life, there *are* certain abiding realities.

IV

First of all, there is faith.

Sara Teasdale somewhere says: "One by one like leaves from a tree my faiths have forsaken me." It is a tragic day in the life of any person when the last leaf falls!

For ultimately we must all have faith in something or someone, else life breaks down completely. It is never a question of faith or no faith, but rather, In what, or in whom, shall we put our faith? Shall it be in ourselves, shall it be in our friends or loved ones, shall it be in "humanity," shall it be in some abstract principle like truth or justice, shall it be in some economic or political scheme, shall it be in the state, democracy, some form of totalitarianism, shall it be in God, and if so what kind of a God?

Vital religion is ultimately based upon an adventurous faith: the faith that at the heart of things there is a God who understands and cares, the faith that life has meaning and purpose; the faith that we human beings—frail and limited as we are—are nevertheless something more than mere puppets dangling at the ends of wires manipulated by some celestial monstrosity; the faith that the cross of Jesus Christ is no mere incident or accident but the revelation of what is ultimate in the world.

Let it be said in no uncertain terms that faith is not blind credulity—"believing things you know ain't so" as one small boy defined it. Neither is it "a magical formula by the mere repetition of which supernatural powers are harnessed to your bidding."

What is it then?

Faith is "reason in a courageous mood." (L. P. Jacks.) Faith is reason venturing out on the truth and goodness and beauty it knows in order to find more of truth and goodness and beauty.

Faith is "betting your life that there is a God" (Donald Hankey)—even when that God is not always immediately real, and one finds himself struggling through the fogbanks of doubt and discouragement.

Or again, in the unforgettable words of Josiah Royce, faith is "the soul's insight, or discovery of some reality, that will enable a man to stand anything that may happen to him in the universe."

Or once more, faith is "believing farther than you can understand and then setting to work to bring to pass what you see." (Dr. Frank Slutz.)

The visitor to Halle, Germany, will see there a large group of buildings erected many years ago by the devout German pietist August Hermann Francke. In one of the quadrangles is a statue of Francke with the simple inscription, "He trusted God." And if one wants to see the results of that trust and faith, all he needs to do is look around him.

The measure of a man's religion depends first upon the magnitude of his faith, and second, upon the object or the objects in which he puts his faith.

V

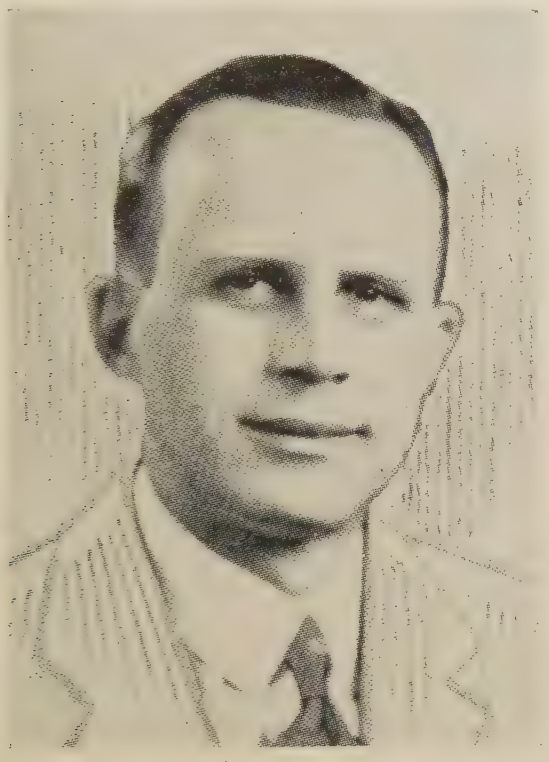
The first abiding reality is faith; the second is hope.

As a matter of fact—and of experience—wherever

there is a vital and vibrant faith, there will always be found a profound hope. Faith is the mother, hope is the daughter.

Tennyson somewhere speaks of "the mighty hopes that make us men." Take hope out of life and men time and again would be crushed by the experiences of life. "What shall we do when hope is gone?" asks the mate in Joaquin Miller's poem "Columbus." And the answer is—There is nothing left to do when *all* hope is gone. You are whipped!

Off the coast of Massachusetts a number of years ago the submarine S-4 was rammed by another ship and almost immediately sank to the bottom. The whole



HAROLD W. RUOPP

crew was caught in a prison of living death. Ships rushed to the scene of the disaster; deep-sea divers went to the bottom to discover if by some chance the crew might be released. We shall never know exactly what took place in the cramped confines of that sunken submarine. Slowly the oxygen in the air and the special reserve tanks gave out and the men lying flat on the deck gasped for breath. But they clung desperately to life. Suddenly there was a tapping noise. A diver beside the submarine placed his helmeted ear to the vessel and listened. The tapping continued; someone on the inside was beating out a message in the dots and dashes of the Morse code. Several questions were asked—then a pause, a long, long pause—finally another question, very slow and very labored: I-s-T-h-e-r-e-A-n-y-H-o-p-e? "Is there any hope?" And that was their last message to the world!

Is there any hope? Men want an answer to that question, and the more desperate the situation in which they find themselves the more they raise the question and the more they want an answer.

If we live by faith, we also live by hope!

In speaking of the Thirty Years' War, Menzel in his *History of the German People* says: "Germany is reckoned by some to have lost one-half, by others two-thirds, of her population during the Thirty Years' War. . . . The country was completely impoverished. The working class had almost totally disappeared. . . . Immense provinces, once flourishing and populous, lay entirely waste and uninhabited. . . . Germany had lost everything save her hopes for the future."

Save her hopes for the future! And by those hopes Germany, as every other nation large or small, has continued to live.

There has recently come to me a letter from a friend in a distant city, a woman who has had to pass through one soul-shaking crisis after another. In this letter she says: "Life certainly deals us a raw hand, but I have the hope that an end will come to these trials some day and that brighter and better days will appear before long."

By hope, that woman, as countless other people, continues to live.

Men need hope; the hope that present difficulties will not last forever; that the day will come when righteousness shall be exalted; when truth shall be enthroned; when justice shall flow down from the mountains; when men shall unite under God's Spirit to build the Kingdom of Love and Peace.

In the final analysis, only a profound religion will give us that kind of hope, for only such a religion sees behind the passing scene to that which is permanent, behind the ephemeral to the eternal. He who has that kind of religion says with the Psalmist: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God."

VI

Finally, love abides.

Looking out across the present world scene, I grant that that is not an easy thing to say, nor to believe—"And now abideth . . . love." There are so many pitiful prejudices, so many heart-breaking hatreds abroad. The whole world seems to have gone mad. Nations misunderstanding; nations fearing; nations hating; nations killing. And yet ultimately what each one wants is love and life. That's the deep tragedy of it all—wanting love and sowing hatred, wanting life and reaping death.

And yet even in the midst of the world's sin, now and again the Word is made flesh; a man of God rises up and through his life and his message proclaims love as the way to salvation, and the way to life. Such a man, in our own times, is Toyohiko Kagawa. In January, 1932, just after the Japanese had begun their conquest of China, Kagawa sat down and wrote a letter to the Chinese. It is a strange document, quite unlike anything one finds in international "diplomatic" correspondence. In it among other things he says:

"I want to ask your pardon for my nation. Because of what we are doing, I cannot preach in the Name of Christ. I ask your attention to this fact, however, that even in Japan at least the majority of the Japanese

were against sending any kind of troops to your province of Shantung. And we Christians were bitterly opposed to it. Therefore pardon us, pardon me especially, because our Christian forces were not strong enough to get the victory over the militarists. But the day will come when we shall be strong enough to do so, and when both nations will be harmonious and peaceful in the Name of Christ."

That was written nearly eight years ago. The situation throughout the world has become infinitely more desperate. But Kagawa's statement still is true. The day will come when not only China and Japan but all the nations of the world will dwell in harmony and peace in the Name of Christ.

The handwriting on the wall is so clear that he who runs may read; Either love must win or life will die. Always above every period of history and above every passing world-scene there towers a cross, and hanging on it is a man himself blameless, himself loving, crying out to all times and all places, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And always—everlastingly and always—over mankind there broods the Divine Love, haunting the hearts of men, and saying to them, "Come unto me."

VII

"And now abideth faith, hope, love; these three."

That faith, that hope, that love get their meaning and validation because they point to something beyond themselves—even to such a God as Jesus revealed to the world.

Therefore to the line "Change and decay in all around I see" we must add another, even as Henry Lyte added it: "O Thou who changest not, abide with me."

Making Science Serve Life

The virtues which should be prized most today, if civilization is to mean the evolution of social ethics to a noble plane, is regard for spiritual values, love of truth and beauty, righteousness, care for the suffering, sympathy with the oppressed, and belief in the brotherhood of man.

Science has made the world one through the facilities of communications and transport now available; and it recognizes no political or racial boundaries in its fields of knowledge.

Men of science are, however, citizens as well as scientific workers; and they are beginning to realize their special responsibilities for securing that the fruits of scientific knowledge are used for human welfare.

It would be a betrayal of the scientific movement if scientific workers failed to play an active part in solving the social problems which their contributions to natural knowledge have created.

Sir Richard Gregory.

Be not forgetful of prayer. Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be a new feeling and new meaning in it, which will give you fresh courage, and you will understand that prayer is an education.—Dostoyevsky.

The Haunting Christ

By Carl H. Elmore

HERE and there in history a man arises to sweep like a tempest across the life of his generation. Certainly the prince of such persons was Jesus. If in our churchly tradition we have visualized him as a gentle figure who edged through the crowd, apostrophizing the lilies, stretching out hands of healing and dispensing words of cheer and comfort, we fail to do justice to the facts.

He was outstandingly the dominant force of his times. About him raged constantly the fierce heats of controversy. At every step of his career he provoked in thinking minds furies of antagonism. When we read the Gospels with this in mind the consuming question of the age seems to have been, "How can we get rid of this troublesome person?"

He burst like a blast upon the traditional calm of Nazareth, and we see his fellow townsmen in a rage of indignation jostle him out of the synagogue and endeavor to heave him over a cliff. He visited the Greek cities east of the Jordan and delegations appeared beseeching him to depart out of their coasts. He walked through the Temple swinging a lash and the cry rings through the High Council, hastily assembled, "This man must die!" Before the crowds who followed him like some warm ray of sunshine, he suddenly held up the cross, and in a panic of fright they scurried away to hide from such a challenge. Even one of his chosen friends, appalled by what he saw in his master's face, exclaimed, "This is too much," and stole away to sell him to his enemies.

JESUS A DISTURBER

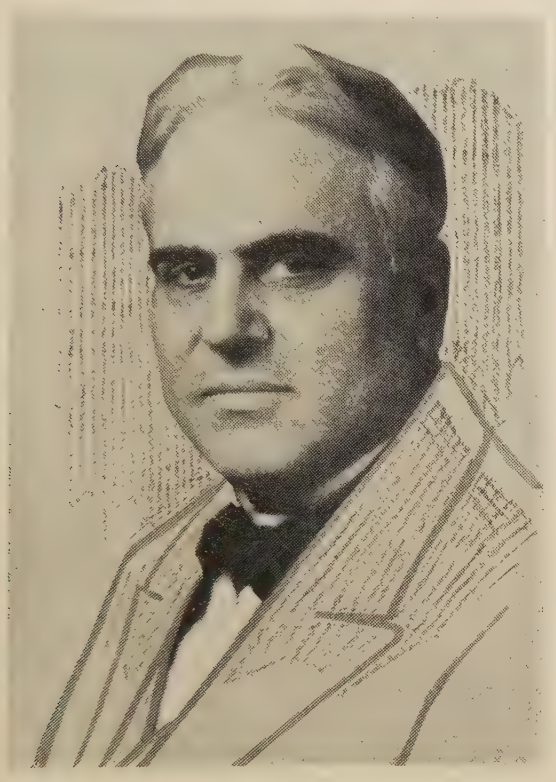
The same characteristic appears in his last trial. Seldom has the heart of a Roman judge been so shaken as Pilate's when he confronted this prisoner at his bar. He writhes with indecision, he struggles to evade responsibility, he orders him away to Herod; he offers a substitute, he wields the bloody scourges to stir the sympathies of his hearers; as a last resort he calls for a basin of water, hoping to intimidate the insistent crowd. All through that agonizing ordeal one thought is uppermost in his mind—"How can I be rid of this disturbing person?"

At last the problem was solved, apparently. They nailed him to a beam and watched him die. A sigh of relief ran through the land: "Thank God there's an end of him. We shall have peace now. The storm is laid." But every such attempt to get rid of Jesus utterly failed. Hardly has the cross been dragged back to the governor's palace before we see a panic-stricken group of the priests pleading with the sepulcher guard: "Take money and swear that his disciples stole his body by night." He haunted the mind of Judas until in an agony of remorse he hurried off into the dark bearing a rope. Through the crowded temple courts, within a few days, the cry was sounding, "This Jesus whom ye crucified has arisen and now demands that every man repent." Through regions that had be-

sought him to depart, and even through the streets of Nazareth, again his voice reechoed, borne on lips that had caught the contagion of his spirit and would not be silenced. Again in every home and in every assembled group the anxious question arose, "What shall we do about this Jesus?"

But struggle as they would, they could not have done with him. There was a challenging power of God contained in that man, in that life, which demanded decision. There was no passive halfway ground on which they could stand; before they were through with him they had to be either for or against.

All this of course is an old story. It happened long



Carl H. Elmore

ago. But it is surprising to discover that after two thousand brilliant years of progress, during which civilization has lifted races and continents then unknown into ascendancy, the situation remains essentially unchanged. Jesus is still the most disturbing force in the world, and like his contemporaries we are adopting expedient after expedient in the struggle to be rid of him. Almost every year some book appears endeavoring to prove him a myth. Convincing argument is advanced and one can almost hear the author exclaim: "There, that settles the matter. The ghost of Jesus is laid." But the book dies and the church bells go on ringing and, defying the claims of scholarship, millions continue to say, "Jesus, the very thought of Thee."

HIS AUTHORITY STILL STANDS

Determined effort is made to destroy his authority. He was nothing but a man, we are told. He didn't know whereof he spoke. His teaching is no more significant than that of other men who have lived, speculated and died. He was at best an Oriental poet; he spoke in vivid imagery. His words cannot be taken literally. It is all cryptic and allegorical, incapable of adaptation to the Western mind. Call him a prophet if you will, a powerful figure with a convincing message for his times. Those times are gone, we live in a new world; a world so vast, so complex, has long since outgrown him. No voice two thousand years old can speak with authority today.

But brush him aside as we will, he comes back today as he did in Palestine. Clearer and clearer it becomes to us as we wrestle with the problems of human relationships, that there is no other way out than the way he proclaimed: "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Desperate in our search after happiness, deluded and disappointed again and again, how often we are forced to say, "Man cannot live by bread alone." Clutching each opportunity to acquire and amass, sooner or later to the most enthusiastic comes home the haunting question, "What does it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Call Jesus what we will, believe in him as we may, in the hard school of experience we find ourselves face to face with him, and compelled to say, "He knew."

NO CLOISTERED SHRINE FOR JESUS

Significantly, again, we have tried to get rid of him by shutting him up in the church, lifting him to a cloistered throne where at intervals we assemble to pray and praise. "This is your domain," we say in substance, "here can you reign undisturbed. Here will we exalt you—but life outside is not any affair of yours. What takes place in the busy weekday world is a matter which does not concern you." And that expedient has signally failed. He will not sit piously in a Sunday shrine, he will not be beguiled by droning hymns of praise. He bursts the pious barriers with which we would hedge him in, he invades the busy ways of life as once he tramped the hills of Galilee. He appears at the directors' meeting, the trade council, he runs his eye questioningly up and down the ledger. In the midst of the rush and clamor he lifts his voice with commanding appeal, "Follow me." There isn't a person in this place today who has not in some responsible moment felt the impact of his thrust upon conscience. He will not be put aside, he must be faced. What are we going to do with Jesus?

When we turn individually, each to the consideration of himself, here once more we encounter this same searching question. Jesus is life's most disturbing force. We have tried, many of us, as his contemporaries did, to be rid of him. We have endeavored, some of us, to strike him out of mind as a pale memory associated with a youthful faith, vivid and compelling during adolescent years, but now outgrown. We have made strenuous effort to crowd him out of a commanding place in our existence, pleading in extenuation of a diminishing loyalty, "There is no room." We have employed compromise, saying: "I acknowledge his claim, let me but extricate myself from unfortunate

obligations; let me finish this transaction, achieve this goal, consolidate the success for which I struggle, and then I will put my allegiance where it belongs."

But he cannot be evaded. Thrust him out as you will, he comes back. Do we not know it only too well? It is a bit of every man's life story that Francis Thompson wrote when he said:

> I fled him down the nights and down the days,
> I fled him down the arches of the years,
> I fled him down the labyrinthine ways
> Of my own mind: And under running laughter,
> Up vistaed hopes I sped: And shot precipitated
> Adown titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
> From those strong feet that followed after.
> But with unhurrying chase, and unperturbed pace,
> Deliberate speed, majestic instancy, they beat,
> And a voice beat more instant than the feet,
> All things betray thee who betrayest me.

WAY, TRUTH, LIFE

We cannot shake ourselves free from him, he haunts our serious moments, he stands between us and our selfish ambitions, we meet him in every place of choice, and when he says "this and not that," the heart intuitively answers, "I ought."

Explain him as you will theologically, this man embodies the challenge of God to human life. He is the love that will not let men go. Here and now, through these symbols of his sacrifice he is calling to you and me: "Oh, restless, troubled, unhappy ones, I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. Apart from me you will never find peace and joy, never attain satisfying success. If any man would come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me."

The Seeing Eye

By Josiah Sibley

Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. Psalm 119:18.

ONE of the advantages of a vacation is the opportunity for new experiences and for seeing unusual things. Last summer I paid a visit to Mount Palomar in San Diego county, southern California, where the great observatory for the huge 200-inch telescope, the greatest known to man, has been constructed. Mount Palomar is located some 80 miles north of San Diego and about 20 miles from the Pacific ocean. It is only 35 miles from our summer home at Vista, which is only 7 miles from the ocean. The mountain is in a region which is picturesque with Indian lore and the old Spanish atmosphere.

Palomar gets its name from the Palomares family, the Spanish group whose domain extended 100 miles to the north and found its seat not far from the present town of Pomona. I remember the Palomares Hotel of tourist boom days in Pomona had that distinctive name. The crown of Palomar is 5,000 feet in altitude. The air is clear and rarefied. It is a level plateau where ferns grow as abundantly as alfalfa or barley in an open field. It is large enough to give hospitality to houses and buildings necessary for the living quarters of workmen and astronomers.

The great observatory on Palomar deserves to rank as one of the modern wonders of the world. Its height is equal to that of a ten-story skyscraper. Its circular area has a radius that makes a building of impressive size. There are two galleries in this dome from which the mechanism of the great telescope may be approached. The mechanism for supporting the 200-inch glass eye weighs a million pounds, and is so carefully balanced that even a child can move it, in its oil support.

This stupendous structure has been erected at a cost of six million dollars, given by the Rockefellers.

It is the housing of that huge eye of the 200-inch telescope which is having its finishing touches placed on it at the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena, 100 miles to the north.

This huge eye that will scan the heavens seems in keeping with the prayer of the psalmist in the 119th Psalm: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of the book of Thy law."

SEEKING NEW TRUTH

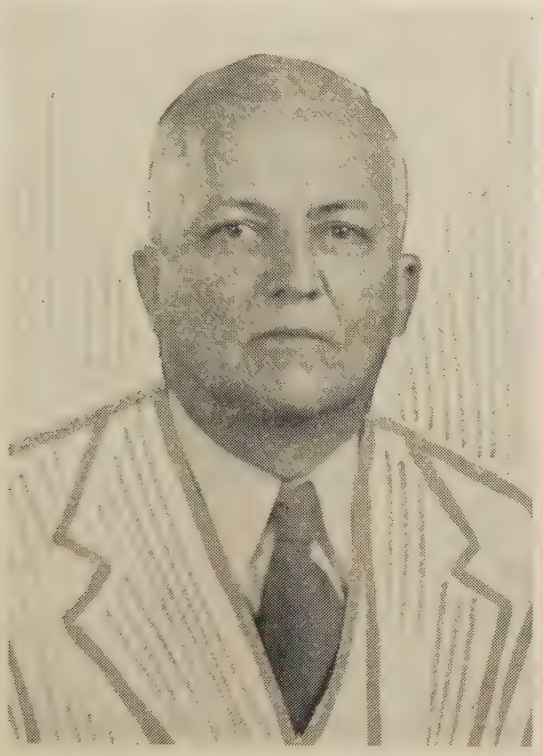
Religious people have often been hesitant about seeking after truth and gaining new knowledge. The story of the warfare between science and religion is a long and bitter story. Finders of new truths have many times been persecuted. They have been persecuted by their fellow scientists and fellow scholars just as much as they have at the hands of religion. When Sir Humphrey Davy, 100 years ago, first announced that heat is a form of motion, he was laughed at by his fellow scientists. Robert Fulton was greeted with slurs when he first proposed that his steamboat could drive up the Hudson river. It was the scholars at Oxford University who issued edicts against the translation of the Bible into the English tongue and burned copies of Tyndale's translation, while he himself had to take refuge in Germany and ultimately had death by drowning meted out to him. When, three hundred years ago, Galileo, with his little telescope, announced that the earth was round and that the sun, rather than the earth, was the center of this universe, he was rebuked by the pope, and had to issue a denial. Down to today we are still a little afraid of new light and new learning. But when one turns to the pages of the Bible, we find that the inspired writers were not afraid of the truth. So the psalmist prayed that he might have his eyes opened to see wonderful things out of the book of God's law.

We go to the Book called the Bible to find out truths about God as he has been found in human experience. The psalmist sought to find truth about God not only in the book of human nature, but in the book of nature. He realized that God is not conscience and moral law alone. He would look abroad in the universe to find God in the aeons of geology, in the majesty of waterfalls, in upward-pointing leaf; so he prayed that he might have the seeing eye. He wanted to realize that if God is conscience, God is also thought; God is

power; God is beauty; God is truth. So he said: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of the book of Thy law."

SCIENTISTS OF GREAT FAITH

Many splendid intellects have sought to find out the laws of physics and of chemistry and of biology and have still carried with them a sense of God. The more majestic they have found the vastness of the universe, the more transcendent was their idea of the Almighty Intelligence that was revealing itself to them. Perhaps the greatest geologist that this country has produced was Joseph LeConte, born in Georgia in 1823, student



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under the great Agassiz at Harvard, professor at the University of South Carolina in the 1850's, head of the chemistry department of the Confederacy. He became the student of the ancient pages of the earth in the Great Lakes region, on the Carolina coast, in the high Sierras of the great West. From 1870 to his death in 1903, a magnificent builder and founder of the University of California, he found wondrous things in God's law of nature. He was an ardent believer in God's method of gradual development in creation. He was an ardent disciple of Jesus. He was a charter member of the First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California. The wonderful things in God's book of nature led him closer to the wonderful things in God's book of revelation in human life which we call the Bible and which was unfolded to us abundantly in Jesus Christ who also loved the truth and said, "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

In these days it is good for youth and all of us to remind ourselves that intellectual people and thoughtful leaders of the past have found it possible to be loyal both to science and religion. And the same is possible today. Indeed, an outstanding characteristic of the great scientists of today is that they have concern not only for their own department of knowledge, but they frankly maintain that their knowledge is shot through with the implication of the spiritual. Dr. Millikan of California Institute of Technology not only delves into the cosmic rays, but he emphasizes the necessity of accepting Jesus' teachings as the only basis of a golden age; and Arthur Compton too is a staunch advocate of the spiritual interpretation of life, as well as Einstein. Sir James Jeans, from his dealings with suns and systems of the stellar universes, holds that the Supreme Architect of the universe must have the mind of a great mathematician. Eddington is a man of religious convictions; his mystical experiences led him to an intimate conviction of God in his own life. Dr. Carrell, who is supremely interested in all the sciences because they act and react in the constitution of "Man the Unknown," is convinced of the value of the spiritual inspirations that enter unto man's being. Psychologists like Dr. Link are champions of man's "return to religion." These men have all looked through the books of nature and of human nature and there have found inscribed the autograph of God, and the story of his creative life, and they are convinced that "their Father worketh hitherto and they work."

This is the conviction which has led some of the most gifted of hymn writers in the Christian church to express their joy in songs that celebrate the recognition of God in his universe, because their eyes have been opened and they have beheld wondrous things out of the book of his law. Joseph Addison was one of the masters of English in the 18th century. He left a hymn that thrills with the sense of God in his world:

> The spacious firmament on high
> With all the blue ethereal sky
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame
> Their great Original proclaim.

The same conviction runs through Maltbie Babcock's hymn:

> This is my Father's world
> And to my listening ears
> All nature sings and round me rings
> The music of the spheres.

NEW SERVICES TO HUMANITY

When one thinks of the "seeing eye" that is to take living pictures of the far-pierced heavens from the observatory on Mount Palomar, one thinks also of the eyes that shall be opened to read that record. And he will confess, as Kepler did a century ago, "The undevout astronomer is mad!" One great ministry of the giant observer of the heavens on Palomar will be the ministry of increased reverence in human hearts and increased conviction of the transcendent God who is not only in all but above all. The eloquent call of Isaiah will be appreciated, "Lift up your eyes on high and see who hath created thee."

One may ask what will be some of the more immediate and concrete services that the great eye on

Palomar will render. "The priests of ancient Egypt discovered 3,000 stars. For 7,000 years men watched those same stars and thought there were no more. Then, all in one night, Galileo, with his tiny telescope, revealed half a million more. The science of astronomy had begun." The giant on Palomar will be a mighty engine of light whose main mirror will be 200 inches in diameter—a machine that will people space with thousands of galaxies, the least of which may hold ten million billion stars. But today rays of light which have traveled millions of years to reach the earth are more important than stars. The largest telescope before the Palomar titan could reach no more than half a billion light years into the darkness. "For 20 years, on Mount Wilson, a 100-inch telescope has been traveling, searching, half a billion light years into the darkness. Now this new discerner of the heavens will look a whole billion light years. He will take pictures of everything that goes on in that silent majesty of night, a billion light years away." What he can do may be mentioned in even more concrete terms. The moon is 240,000 miles from the earth. The power of the magnetic eye of this giant will make the moon look as if it were only 40 miles away! It will bring the moon so close that he will have to be near-sighted to see it! So the moon will have to be relegated to lesser eyes for study.

This giant mirror of Palomar will utilize all the knowledge of modern engineering and of modern photography, for the sake of picturing the hidden secrets of what goes on in the heavens. Some may ask what is the purpose of this knowledge. Dr. Max Mason, head of this great work, gives the answer: "It is the springboard from which the philosopher may leap toward the solution of the problems of the universe." "Three phases of research that may be helped by this giant's work are the study of the constitution of matter, investigation in the evolution of stars, and the solution of the structure of the universe. These three purposes are outlined by those intimately connected with the work of the observatory. They suggest that probably the most dramatic work is to seek proof of Eddington's theory of the expanding universe. There are island universes lying scattered through space in apparently even distribution. But it has been discovered by study of their spectra that they are moving outward at mighty velocities. The phenomenon which suggested this was the red shift of the spectra, interpreted as the result of velocity away from the observer. On this basis, Eddington constructed his picture of an Einsteinian universe, composed of islands in a sea of four-dimensional space, swelling toward the infinity."

A CHALLENGE TO AVERAGE MEN

The giant on Palomar is a challenge to the ordinary man to open his eyes to the many wonders that are round about him. John Burroughs, the naturalist, whose eyes were keen to observe many things that average people did not see, cast reproach upon ordinary human blindness by saying epigrammatically: "Some people have eyes, others have buttons." I have a friend, a minister, who is one of the best bird and tree experts in Tennessee. He knows every species of bird and tree in his west Tennessee country. He knows how many carloads of seeds and insects the birds of Tennessee consume every day. He can tell the story of birds that are humorous and birds that are superstitious. He gets his knowledge, not out of books, but from observation. He opens his eyes to see. I have another minister friend in southern California whose father was an astronomer. This man did not follow the profession of his father, but he constructed himself a serviceable telescope, just as Galileo did, and he could tune in on the stars whose light waves set the Chicago Exposition going.

That giant on Palomar is a challenge to ordinary people to gird up the loins of their minds and to use their best intelligence for doing a worthy part of the work that must be done in the world. Into the construction of that giant lens and that great cage in which it swings has gone the best work of draftsmen and engineers and metallurgists and glass manufacturers. Accuracy to the two-millionth of an inch has had to be attained.

That giant on Palomar symbolizes the opening of the eye to the possibility of service to mankind through philanthropic vision. The opening of the eyes of the Rockefellers to the responsibility of a right use of wealth infinitely surpassed the myopia of the elder Rockefeller to the right method of accumulating wealth. It was a splendid vision that determined the use of six millions of dollars for the service of human knowledge in discerning the stars from the top of this mount.

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

There is a power of vision and of understanding that comes to those who have to pierce through the darkness, even as the giant eye of Palomar has to do. Strong vision comes not through gazing at the sun, but through looking through the darkness to the coming of the day. From out the darkness a vision splendid can be seen that is never revealed in the fullness of the daylight. From the depth of a well one may look up and behold stars shining in heaven's blue. Out of the darkness of discouragement, difficulty and defeat has come many a glorious vision of deliverance and of the joy of conquest. Milton, when physical blindness came upon him, was still able to see the marble palaces of "Paradise Regained." The blind girl went singing, thanking God that she had eyes that could see with the soul. Out of the darkness, Helen Keller and Ann Sullivan were able to see visions and to translate messages which were for the enrichment of a whole generation, which had eyes but could not see.

That giant on Palomar, looking out into the darkness, suggests also the possibilities of the intellectually blind, morally unseeing, spiritually darkened. Do you recall those two young men, on the first Easter afternoon, who were walking with sad spirits because they thought their best friend was dead forever. "But He, still living, drew near and spake with them." "But their eyes were holden," quaintly says the record, that "they should not know him." Strange, but they could not know him. They were blind to the expression of

his countenance. They were blind to the message he gave them in his conversation. I wonder how spiritual blindness is induced. I think it comes from lack of using the spiritual eyes. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. Looking only at material things leaves unused the spiritual vision, leaves undiscerned the reality of the fair country where "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to imagine, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me;
Spirit Divine!

Lighting the Fires of Liberty

By Russell J. Clinchy

A SHORT while ago a manifesto on the freedom of science was issued by 1,501 American scientists. It was primarily directed to the acute abridgement of freedom in scientific research caused by the attitude of the nazi political leaders in Germany, but in essence it dealt with the same curtailment of freedom in many other nations of the world under the power of authoritarian leaders. One paragraph of this manifesto will suffice to present its ringing message:

"We firmly believe that in the present historical epoch democracy alone can preserve intellectual freedom. Any attack upon freedom of thought in our sphere, even as non-political a sphere as theoretical physics, is in effect an attack upon democracy itself. When men like James Franck, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann may no longer continue their work, whether the reason is race, creed or belief, all mankind suffers the loss. They must be defended in their right to speak the truth as they understand it. If we American scientists wish to avoid a similar fate, and if we wish to see the world continue to progress and prosper, we must bend our efforts to that end now."

No words are needed to amplify that statement, for it stands as rugged and majestic as Mount Everest, a declaration of the towering and ultimate prerogatives of the human mind to "think the thoughts of God after him." Every man and woman who cherishes the values of human freedom, and who considers freedom of the mind to be an inviolable possession of free men, is willing to join the ranks of those who create a solid phalanx in its support, and is one who is willing to say without ostentation, but with intensity: "Give me such freedom, or let there be death." Existence without such freedom would be death.

Our thought and endeavor need not be upon the necessity of supporting such a statement as this manifesto of the scientists, but rather the attempt to discover the fundamental basis for such a statement of the right to such freedom. The facts are that such a belief in freedom is being denied; that the exercise of such freedom is being abridged in definite and concrete ways; and that there are evil portents that the desire to curtail the freedom of man's mind is increasing rather than decreasing all over the world. This is the phase of life that Christians who live in the "freedom wherewith Christ hath set us free" need to face, and if we do we shall come to a very definite conclusion concerning the place of religion in the struggle.

It is time now for all religious people to perceive, and then to proclaim, the understanding that it is through the religious intuitions that we best understand the fundamental meaning of human freedom, and that we are best stirred to action for the maintenance of freedom by the impulse of religious conviction. Two sentences from the sixth chapter of Isaiah graphically portray the power of religion to move men. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, high and lifted up; then said I, 'Here am I, send me.'" It was at the moment when this able young attendant at the court of the king saw a vision of the Lord God, high and lifted up in all his holiness and majesty, that there flowed through him the consuming fire to be of use, and he cried out, "Here am I, use me."

Such has always been the power of high religion, for it is only a great conception of God which gives us a great conception of man. If our idea of God be small and meager, merely a vague uncertainty, or an outright denial of his existence, then man can rise no higher than such an idea, and the final answer is not that man is little lower than the angels, but that he is only a little higher than the animals. The stream never rises higher than its source, and the conception of man is as high as its source. It is very difficult to inspire men when they can only believe that they are merely what they see men to be. It is when they see the Lord, high and lifted up, that they discover the majesty and holiness of the eternal source of this life of ours, and are moved to aspire and to dream until they cry out with gladness: "Here am I, send me to lift mankind to Thy heights." Our belief in freedom streams from our consciousness that life which has its source in God must be destined to think and act with the attributes of God within men's minds and hearts.

It is upon this premise, then, that mankind bases its belief in liberty and dedicates itself not only to lighting the fires of liberty but to the tending of them as the altar fires of human life. This belief in liberty, and the dedication to its existence, will lead us then to some very definite convictions.

I

The first of these convictions is that in the struggle for the liberty of the mind we are confronted with the battle between the higher and the lower conscience of mankind. There need be no excuse for the use of militaristic terms, for it is a battle, though we hope a battle without blood. Yet we can never dare forget

the reality of the struggle, and this generation will not be allowed to forget that the struggle between those who want a low conscience and those who desire a high conscience in life will be real in its time.

But let us put this in concrete terms. A while ago James MacDonald, who was then High Commissioner of the League of Nations for the Refugees, said that the most discouraging factor in helping to solve this problem was the fact that when he talked with nazi political leaders he found that they did not give the same definitions to such words as justice, human rights, mercy, goodness that he had been taught to give to them. He discovered that he could not reach any com-

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mon decision with them because the symbols of the words they used did not convey the same meaning. If Mr. MacDonald were to speak here this morning of human rights, we and he would have a common mind upon that idea. But that was not so in dealing with nazi officials. The meanings given to such words as rights and justice and mercy were one thing to them, and another to the men who were trying to help the refugees.

That is an example of the difference in the meaning between the lower conscience and the higher conscience of mankind. There are people in the world today who state definitely that they believe in the ultimate right of brute force, of the superiority of a certain race, and that all rights belong to those whose physical power is greater than those who are weak. That is not an accusation against the German people any more than what an absurd American general said lately should be held as an accusation against the American people. But it is true that today there is a concerted and strong effort being made to substitute this low conscience of mankind for the higher which religion has always proclaimed.

It is so easy to condemn this in the nazis, both leaders and followers, and it is so hard to perceive how blind we are to its implications within our life. Sometimes we do not know that we are not struggling as we should for the victory of the higher conscience. A few weeks ago a steamship with nine hundred refugees aboard steamed up and down along our coast as these forlorn outcasts from their own homes sought a haven of safety. They were men and women and children who were the victims of the triumph of the lower conscience of man. I am not berating my countrymen, for I myself did nothing, but is not that our shame? While nine hundred victims of man's return to the brute plead for a haven, no one in this Christian land, and this most favored nation on earth, raised his voice that they be given a refuge. Yes, we know all the problems that are raised, but somehow I cannot forget a story of the ninety and nine who were safe in the fold, but Jesus said that he must find the one that was outside and bring him home.

One of the religious organizations that is trying to help these refugees has had a poster made. It is a simple picture of Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus fleeing into Egypt. Under it are these words: "In the name of these refugees who fled from the wrath of Herod, will you help those who are the refugees of our time?"

Yes, the battle is on in the world. Do we believe in the victory of the higher conscience of mankind over the lower? If we do we shall have to battle the forces of darkness in high places. But we shall have to do more. We shall have to see with our mind's eye a ship, laden with beaten, forlorn, hopeless fathers and mothers and children, holding out their hands to those who say they believe in the higher conscience of mankind. When we give our answer let us remember that it is only the higher conscience that lights the fires of liberty.

II

With this must go the emphasis which religion places upon the right of the individual to be a person. It seems so obvious to us now, but no one can comprehend the travail that has been endured that such a conception of human life might come to pass. Over seven hundred years ago, on that field of Runnymeade in England, King John sat surrounded by men who were determined to be free, and he signed a charter which was destined to be called the Great Charter, and which read: "No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any way destroyed, now will we go upon him, except by the legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land."

That was a declaration that men and women were persons, individual personalities with fundamental rights and duties which belong to the development of personality. But such a faith did not begin with that dramatic setting of the Magna Carta. It began with the religious intuition so far back in history that the only record we have of it is a beautiful folk-story which

tried to tell the story in the unforgettable drama of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden walking in companionship with God in the cool of the evening. We understand now that it is the story, framed in a literary style which is unmatched by even Dante and Shakespeare, which tried to picture for us the great discovery that man is a person, someone who bears within him the capacity to share in the life of God who made him.

That is the basis of liberty, for if it be understood, and if it be proclaimed, that man is a person, then of necessity the world must be fashioned so that the attributes of that personality—the ability to think, to discover, to create and to build—have the opportunity for growth and development. The Garden of Eden has passed into the rose-colored mists of our memories and the warm hope of our quiet hearts that our steps might lead us to gates which would open upon an Eden for our souls, but still the old story is true that we are persons who work and walk with God, and liberty is born of such a faith.

In Maxwell Anderson's play, "Valley Forge," there is a scene in which General Washington is standing on a wintry, bleak day before one of the wretched huts in which the Continental soldiers are trying to protect themselves from the snow and wind. Washington watches the men, hungry, sick and cold. Then turning to one of his lieutenants he says, "This liberty will seem so cheap to those who will not have to pay its cost."

For so long that was true for so many of us. We were of the generation who thought that liberty was a gift which fell like the rain upon the just and the unjust. Now we know that it is bought with a price, and that the price is so great.

The measure of our vision of God will be the measure of our capacity to light the fires of liberty. From all the concentration camps, from the refugee ships, from the darkened halls of universities, from the bonfires of burning books, from the exiled searchers for truth, from the millions who feel the power of brutish force across the world to force mankind back once more into an ancient barbarism, there arises the cry for release from bondage. Then again the ancient words ring across the world: "In the year that King Uzziah died (the year that hope seemed to have died) I saw the Lord high and lifted up; then said I: 'Here am I, send me.' "

The scientists have stated the case for the liberty of the human mind. The duty of Christians is not done when they have applauded such action. The duty laid upon a Christian is to reach far back into the sublime intuitions of the soul of man and interpret the meaning of human liberty in terms of the living presence of God within the forms of our human life. The cry for liberty of the higher conscience of man is not the cry of the lion for liberty to stalk its prey. The human cry for liberty is the cry of those who have seen in Christ what life like ours was meant to be—life that has lifted up its eyes to the holy glory of God and has encompassed the holiest truth of earth, the truth that we who are human have been fashioned by the hands of God, who calls each one by name.

It is such vision that let Paul, and Savonarola, and John Huss light the fires of liberty. It is such vision that made them, and will make us, worthy to live in the glory of such liberty.

Our Heritage

THE CHURCH is the chief conserver of spiritual values, and it is the institutional embodiment of our Christian heritage. During the Dark Ages it preserved not only religion but civilization; it has fostered the spread of education throughout the centuries; it has nourished the spirit of democracy; it has built moral attitudes into the lives of millions of persons; it has made people more humane in their treatment of the weak and underprivileged; it has goaded consciences to abolish slavery; it has lifted the position of women and children. We are the inheritors of this freedom and this humanization, in which the church has not been the sole but has been the chief agent. To turn our backs on it is to cast off our cultural parentage.

GEORGIA HARKNESS.

A Pastoral Prayer

BY WARE W. WIMBERLY

OUR Father: Help Thy people to observe Christmas Day as Christians, not as pagans.

Lead us on Christmas morning to our Bibles. By Thy Spirit interpret the Sacred Word as we read in Matthew of the Wise Men, in Luke of the Shepherds, in John of the Word made flesh, in Mark of the record of Thy ministry in Christ.

Lead us to the communion of prayer. Guide us as we pray. Fill our minds with thoughts of Thy majesty and mercy. Cause us to wonder and to adore as we think on the Wondrous Birth. Inspire us to pray that the mercies of our God may be known not alone to us, but to loved ones, to friends, and to enemies. Inspire us especially to pray that the lowering night of war may give way to the dawn of peace. Make the good will of angelic song a reality in our prayers.

Help us to lead Christlike lives. Take from us doubt and despair, deliver us from anxiety, and give us the happy countenances which come of faith. Withhold us from the bitter word. Inspire us to say the kindly and the fitting word. Restrain us from the selfish act. Strengthen us to self-denial.

On Christmas Day, and on every day that follows, make us, we pray, more Christlike in thought and word and deed.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Minister as Local Church Leader

By Clarence W. Kemper

THE minister is a leader in the business and administrative life of his church. The church for which he is minister is an organization, an institution, an organism. He must know his church, all that can be known, more than anybody else knows. Facts about it must be at his command always. By right of being pastor of the church, he sits at the head of the table. It will do him no harm to be known as a good business man. He throws away his leadership when he says, "You take care of the material affairs and I of the spiritual." In the very best sense of the term, he sits in the driver's seat. Alas! both for the minister and the church, if he voluntarily surrenders that prerogative.

Hear the wise words of Dr. Albert Palmer relative to administration: " 'I am willing to preach and pray and counsel. But deliver me from the administrative job, I can't be chained down to that!' Yes, but do you realize that it is precisely on the administrative side of his work that the minister comes nearest to sharing the life and experiences of his laymen? They have to deal constantly with problems of organization and routine. They have to learn how to get along with all sorts of people. Who are you to preach to them on Sunday if you are not capable of bearing efficiently and cheerfully the same kind of burdens they bear all week long?"

● *Potentialities in A Church*

Let the minister's imagination catch fire with the potentialities put in his hands. Here, responsible to his touch, amenable to his direction, wistfully awaiting his wise leadership, is a great human, spiritual organism of a few hundred or a few thousand souls to become flaming witnesses for our Lord, evangelists of his way of life, builders of his kingdom among men, and heralds of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Having known his church, he must think things through, define his plans, state his objectives so crystal clear that "he who runs may read." Members want to know exactly what their church is driving at, where it is going and why. He must outline the ways and means of arriving at the ends, not dropping them with a "take it or leave it" attitude, but "now we will work together to do it." When he sits in any board or organization meeting, he will have given such advance thought that he has in his own mind a suggestion and outline of the way through. His way need not be the way adopted, but have a plan he must. "Wherever he sits is the head of the table" and no wise minister will forfeit that position. He may shrink from it, but as a good minister he cannot avoid it.

● *Leader of His Church in Adventurous Living*

How serious is the failure or success of churches and ministers here! Granted a minister sees clearly the task ahead for the church, there may be "lions in the way." Perhaps it is reorganization in line with democratic policies. Or it may be a building enterprise required to hold the leadership and position of usefulness. Or it may be lifting the whole level of missionary participation in the life of the church. If, as is so often and truthfully said, the warmth of the pulpit determines the temperature of the church, then here again the minister must be the leader in adventurous stewardship and sacrificial life of the church.

Clarence W. Kemper

The experience of some of us in widely different sections of the country in east, midwest and west leads to the conclusion that in not a few of our churches across the country the product of their efforts could be doubled without serious hurt to anyone. If only pastor and people, dealing in maximums of stewardship rather than minimums, went at it in white heat, and dead in earnest, believing with all our hearts that the Lord has called us to a holy enterprise, and bending our backs in unison to the accomplishment of it.

But if we shrink from that kind of leadership, let us be reminded that Jesus Christ went to his throne by way of the cross. We cannot forget the "One who reigns from the tree." Father Tyrrell states it for all of us: "Again and again I have been tempted to give up the struggle, but always the figure of that Strange Man hanging on the cross sends me back to my task again."

Surely such reminders cannot but send ministers and churches back to serve our Lord with a venturesome love.

O dearly, dearly has He loved,
And we must love Him too,
And trust in His redeeming blood,
And try His works to do.

God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of Christ our Lord.

● *The Minister as a Leader of Thought*

We are quite aware of all that is said about the minister being left behind. Frankly, we do not believe it. And if, and so far as it is so, the minister has himself to blame. The very fact that he is so often cried out against as a radical, called by the designation of pink or red, is often but another way of saying he is ahead of his contemporaries in his thought life.

He had better be, for there is a wistfulness here which borders on the pathetic. Men are baffled and beaten by the swift-moving thought currents of today that are too much for them. Our common life is in terrible confusion. And because men do not know the way through they are tempted to do nothing. Like nomads after a desert storm, they stand still waiting for the stars to come out. Much of the confusion and consequent inaction of recent years as to the whole enterprise of foreign missions and social ministry of the church arises from this fact. Moreover, one of the tragic symptoms of the local scene is the defense reaction and line of least resistance, by which even ministers excuse themselves from serious wrestling with hard facts in a contentment with what is smugly but inaccurately called "preaching the simple gospel."

It is a matter of great satisfaction to the real minister determined to give constructive thought guidance to his church that so many fine things are being done in this field today. Whether he agrees with them or not, he cannot have traveled during recent weeks with John Macmurray in *The*

Clue to History, Hugh Vernon White in *A Working Faith for the World,* Harry Emerson Fosdick in *A Guide to Understanding the Bible* or Samuel Angus in *Essential Christianity* without feeling his own intellectual skyline pushed back and his own soul greatly enlarged.

We Baptists are challenged both in thought and action in a serious way. Have we forgotten the convictions and sacrifices of the Anabaptists on the continent of Europe for freedom of conscience? Do we not hear again the voice of John Bunyan and English Baptists crying out for conscience' sake? Is Roger Williams, with his resolute determination that state and church must be separate, a forgotten man? What of our traditional claims of "freedom of conscience" in a world where the totalitarian state extends increasing "coercion of mind and spirit" over vast populations of the earth? Freedom in religion is fading from the world, while the individual is increasingly regimented. Personality is submerged and conscience itself is stifled.

● *Leader in the Discipline Of Souls*

The quality of the church will be no finer than that of her minister. He is the first exponent of character in the community. As in the beginning, he is a witness to the resurrection life. Character, integrity, reality, transparent honesty must be his possessions. Men seeing him go about the community must feel, if they do not say, "There goes a man who has dwelt long with the Christ and learned his way." Heywood Broun would scarcely be taken as a preacher, but listen to his words: "It isn't that the community turns a somewhat inattentive ear toward the preachers because they advance a scheme of life too difficult and too lofty. The thing they ask for isn't good enough. Mystics and saints never fail to capture the imagination of mankind in any generation." He stands in succession of "the Word became flesh." Sinclair Hertel puts it thus:

> Jesus shut within a book
> Is not worth a passing look.
> Jesus prisoned in a creed
> Is a fruitless Lord, indeed.
> But Jesus in the hearts of men
> Shows his tenderness again.

That was a wistful and revealing experience which Dr. Beaven had when the children were passing out of Lake Avenue one day, and one little child failed to get the glance he expected, and on reporting to his parents said, "God didn't look at me today." Surely every minister has been quickened afresh for this fine art of revealing God, as he recalls the experience of the shoemaker near Trinity Church who was in the habit of slipping into the corner to hear Phillips Brooks preach. One day he wrote him a letter saying: "You will not know me, but I often come to your church. I do so because when I hear you preach, I seem to forget you; you make me think of God."

Yes, "The Secret Place" and all the rest of them are valuable so far as they go, and we have a right to be thankful for these helps in scaling the altar-stairs of God. But all of this will never be comparable to the place, and power, and luminous influence of a minister whose life is aglow with that "light never seen on land or sea." He must be the perpetual giver of intimations of that One who is, indeed, "the Light of the World." The minister must be the exponent of the disciplined spirit, chastened, refined, illumined and radiant because he has walked with God.

> If chosen souls could never be alone
> In deep-mid silence open-doored to God
> No great thing had ever been dreamed or done.
> The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

● *Good Ministers of Jesus Christ*

No good minister can ever forget "Ian Maclaren's" arresting story, "His Mother's Sermon." As the hour draws near for his first sermon he feels the spirit of his sainted mother brooding over him, while her consuming desire becomes articulate in, "Be sure ye say a gude word for Jesus Christ." But alas! every earnest and humble minister knows that is a real responsibility in this hour.

What shall we say to the serious young people whom we covet for leadership in the church of our Lord, as to their oft-repeated question in the recent country-wide University Christian Mission, "But how do we practice Christ in the kind of a world we've got to live in?" Good minister, what is your answer? Or that other frequent remark from the same university circles, "Why, I never knew Christianity was like this!" Again, good minister, why don't our finest young people know what Christianity is like? Were we not their ministers before they knew the university life?

We agree with the words of Dr. George Craig Stewart: "The last decade with its depression, its rise of the totalitarian state, its resurgence of paganism, its shallowness and silliness, its great tumultuous signs of destructive and demonic powers abroad in the earth, has intensified my devotion to Jesus as the Great One betrayed and crucified over and over again by His own followers, yet ever risen and renewing the earth through a faithful remnant of genuine discipleship."

God grant we may be such ministers as never to deserve the rebuke of Milton upon the stupid ministers of his day, "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

'Luccock, Patton and Palmer rolled into one' is the way Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, Editor of The *Christian Century Pulpit,* describes the new book

Highland Shepherds

By ARTHUR WENTWORTH HEWITT

The author—already widely known for his *Steeples Among the Hills*—is thus characterized by Dr. Morrison: "He has the soundest judgment of preacher situations, the most delicate insight into the human nature of lay folk, the most devastatingly gentle power of showing up preachers' foibles, and the clearest idea about the relation of preaching to the pastoral function of any writer whose work has fallen into my hands."

But this book is not only for the rural minister, Dr. Morrison insists: "If Dr. Fosdick or Dr. Tittle or Dr. Truett should ask me to name the one book on the Christian ministry which he personally for his soul's good ought to read, I would name *Highland Shepherds.*" **$2.00**

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• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

ORDAINED *in the ministry of the* Methodist Episcopal Church in 1917, Rev. G. BROMLEY OXNAM was pastor of the Church of All Nations, Los Angeles, and secretary of the Los Angeles Missionary and Extension Society from 1917 to 1927. During four years of this period he was professor of social ethics at the University of Southern California. In 1927-28 he taught at Boston University School of Theology and in 1928 became president of DePauw University, which post he held until 1936 when he was elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, resident in the Omaha area. Since last spring he has served as bishop in the important New England area. The sermon published in this issue was delivered at the Uniting Conference held in Kansas City last spring.

Rev. BURRIS JENKINS *held responsible* posts in the educational field in his earlier years, but since 1907 he has ministered at the Linwood Boulevard Christian Church (now Community Church) Kansas City, Mo. He has been a newspaper editor and has written many books, including several volumes of fiction. His latest book is entitled *Where My Caravan Has Rested,* his autobiography.

A graduate of DePauw University and the Boston University School of Theology, Rev. DELOS O'BRIAN is minister of the First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Del. He has been president of the Joseph Priestley Conference of Unitarian Churches and president of the Unitarian Council of the Middle Atlantic States and he has held other important posts in his denomination.

For the past eight years Rev. HAROLD W. RUOPP has been professor of preaching at Boston University School of Theology and minister of the Congregational Church at Stoneham, Mass. On September 1 he succeeded Dr. F. F. Shannon as minister of the famous Central Church, Chicago.

Rev. CARL H. ELMORE *graduated from* Union Theological Seminary in 1906, and was ordained in the Presbyterian ministry. Later he studied in Edinburgh and in German universities. From 1908 to 1920 he was pastor of the Congregational Church in Briarcliff Manor, N. Y. During the past nine years he has ministered to the First Presbyterian Church, Englewood, N. J.

Rev. JOSIAH SIBLEY *is pastor of the* Lindsay Memorial Presbyterian Church U.S.A. in Memphis, Tenn. He has previously served as minister of the Westminster Church in Pasadena, Cal., the Second Church in Chicago and Calvary Church in San Francisco.

Completing his education at Columbia and at Drew and Yale seminaries, Rev. RUSSELL J. CLINCHY was for a time associate pastor to Dr. Atkins in Detroit and to Dr. Jefferson in New York. He is minister of Mt. Pleasant Congregational Church, Washington, D. C.

Rev. CLARENCE W. KEMPER *is minister* of the First Baptist Church, Denver, Colo. His contribution is part of an address delivered at this year's meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention.

Rev. WARE W. WIMBERLY *is minister* of the First Presbyterian Church, Wabash, Ind.

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

M. H. MARKLEY, Methodist, Morehouse, Mo. "Sanctified Emotion." Matt. 5:4—"Blessed are they that mourn."

TALMAGE C. JOHNSON, First Baptist, Kinston, N. C. "The Sin of Resignation." John 5:6—"Do you want your health restored?" (Moffatt)

J. KENDRICK BALLOU, First Congregational, Alturas, Cal. "Through Tragedy to Triumph." John 16:33—". . . in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

CARLTON J. FRAZIER, Methodist, Leonardsville, N. Y. "The Unmanageable God." Matt. 26:42c—"Thy will be done."

JAMES DAVID KITCHIN, JR., Graham Christian, Bluefield, Va. "Christ's Religion of Cosmic Range." Matt. 28:19—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

RICHARD LUNGREN, Methodist, Rock Springs, Wyo. "The Patriotism of Jesus." Luke 19:41, 42—"When he came into full view of the city, he wept aloud over it and exclaimed, O that at this time thou only knewest what makes for peace!" (Weymouth)

PHILLIP W. SARLES, First Congregational, Emporia, Kan. "Losing Face and Saving the Soul." Matt. 10:39—"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

J. GORDON MCKENZIE, First Presbyterian, Canisteo, N. Y. "No Blackouts." Matt. 5:14, 16—"Ye are the light of the world. . . . So let your light shine."

HAROLD E. CARLSON, Temple Methodist, Los Angeles, Cal. "Peace Doves of Silver and Gold." Ps. 68: 12, 13—"Kings and their armies are flying . . . their spoil is divided by Israel the fair dove at home, till her wings are covered with silver, her pinions shimmer in gold."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon
. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)
. . . . . .
Name of minister
. . . . . .
Name of church
. . . . . .
Address

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE most important occurrence in the European war has been the offer of the Belgian and Dutch monarchs to mediate for peace. This offer has been, apparently, refused. France and England rejected it out of hand, and Hitler based his refusal to consider it on the fact that the Allies had rejected it. What may be going on in the diplomatic channels is a closely guarded secret, but it now seems clear that the Allies are intending to fight to the bitter end to gain an unequivocal victory over Hitler. Their position is that Germany must consent to substantial rehabilitation of Czechoslovakia and Poland (France includes also the rehabilitation of Austria) before they will enter peace negotiations. Such terms necessarily carry with them the downfall of the nazi regime, for Hitler could not save his prestige as Fuehrer if he consented to any such disgorgement of the gains of nazi strategy and military might. Meantime the enemy armies are massed in virtual inactivity on the western front. The Allies will hardly take the offensive there, but are trusting the naval blockade to force Germany, strangled to the point of desperation, to take it. As November comes to its final days the Germans are making a show of challenging the blockade itself, by means of submarines and mines which are destroying not only increasing numbers of merchant ships, both Allied and neutral, but fighting ships as well. Whether Germany will be more effective in this furtive form of sea war than in 1917 remains to be seen. The "Bore War" is steadily passing from the boredom which has characterized its first three months into a state of ferocity born of desperation on both sides.

War Enters New Phase

The Book of the Month

THIS NATION UNDER GOD, *The Rauschenbusch Lectures for 1938, by Arthur E. Holt. Willett, Clark & Co. $2.00.*

EVERYBODY who knows him listens expectantly when Dr. Arthur E. Holt speaks. Not alone expectantly, but teachably. I think of him as a man of wisdom, in that fine sense of the word which means so much more than knowledge. His wide knowledge of the social order and of human nature is shot through with Christian imagination. In this book, Dr. Holt has given us his ripened thought. He believes that the movement toward state control of so many of our social activities, while a necessary development of democracy, carries with it the peril of totalitarianism and may destroy individual freedom. But instead of arresting this movement, he insists that it be supplemented and directed and kept from excess by the development of a voluntary democracy alongside of political democracy. He calls us back to "responsible living." We have lost our sense of moral responsibility in the complexity of modern life and are coming to lean more and more upon the state. We cannot go back to the "town meeting" stage, but we must devise means of bringing men together face to face so that they can recover the almost forgotten sense of *belonging* together in a community. This is a sociological and psychological problem. But it is preeminently *the* Christian problem—the problem of creating the "Community of the Holy Imagination." The place of the church in democracy is set forth in connection with this idea. Those of us who hold, as I do, that democracy and Christianity are tied up together will find their faith confirmed and enriched by the reading of this book.

A Thought for the Month

WE ARE adjured by the apostle to beware of covetousness. "Thou shalt not covet," is one of the ten commandments. What is covetousness? It is the inordinate desire to own for oneself what belongs to another. This is a degrading state of mind. It implies an excessive regard for oneself. But it also implies a false sense of the importance of ownership. The covetous person is unable to enjoy the goods of life unless he has sole proprietorship of them. When he sees them in others' possession he is made unhappy. His unhappiness is intensified by other people's happiness, which he wrongly assumes is due to their possession of something that he wants. Covetousness lodges the secret of happiness in one's own ego and in the enlargement of one's ego by the mere addition of more possessions. Christianity is out to destroy covetousness. But it does not propose to destroy it by cultivating dumb resignation to one's lack of possessions. That would make Christianity an opiate indeed, and would only establish and sanctify the injustice with which the good things of life are distributed. Christianity recognizes that many things are the unjust possessions of their proprietors, and it is bound to undo this injustice. But the effort to undo it will end in more injustice and utter chaos in our social order if it has no other motivation than covetousness on the part of those who are dispossessed. The Christian alternative of covetousness lies in the sphere of the friendly imagination. In this sphere we must learn to share in the happiness of those who rightly possess good things which we ourselves would prize. Not to be able to do this is to be a misanthrope, and to cut ourselves off from the natural friendly relationships with one's fellows. How does Christianity save us from covetousness? It does it by making us aware that all things are ours—even the things that belong to others—by creating in our hearts the capacity vicariously to enter into other people's enjoyment of the good things which they rightly possess.

The Alternative Of Covetousness

Charles Clayton Morrison

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